

the validity of this amendment. So if you have any questions, I am prepared to answer them, but this is such a bad bill that I have to do everything I can to stop it. And if the Legislature just insists on enacting it, I want it to be clear to everybody what is actually being done. There have been instances where merchants are very careless and slipshod in how they conduct their business. Senator Pirsch has offered, I think, some articles showing how much is lost by merchants to shoplifting. I didn't read every word of the articles but the merchants have a much bigger problem of shoplifting by their employees. The shrinkage not only in merchandise, but in cash, attributable to employees is what is really staggering. So maybe what she ought to do, or the merchants should have done, was to come in with something that would make the parents and grandparents of the employees responsible for the wrong done by the employees. Senator Pirsch and others have been against what they call the deep pocket philosophy, I call it the fat pocket philosophy, which means that if you can't get at somebody who may not have any money, you want to be able to find somebody who does have money and sue that person even if they're not responsible for what has happened. That is what this bill is trying to do. She wanted to support so-called tort reform that would abolish joint and several liability. That is a concept by which, if several people are involved in an incident or brought into it, you don't parcel out liability based on the amount of fault of each person, you make each individual responsible for the total amount. Now, if you can get some from everybody, fine. But if you have five defendants, one has money, the others don't, then that one defendant can be made responsible for the entire amount. After being opposed to that, when it comes to these big companies and doctors and others who have money, she comes in with a bill that would impose joint and several liability in the case of parents who may not even know what this child has done, a child that may not even live with the parents, a child that could be a runaway. I think the bill is bad, but I'll go into that by way of other amendments. This one that I'm talking about deals with only with the Small Claims Court. I hope you will strike the two sections, or Section 2, so that the current law relative to Small Claims Court will remain intact, and that is that any person can use this court no more than two times in a calendar week, no more than ten times in a calendar year. The purpose of the Small Claims Court is not to be a collection agency. So I hope you will support this amendment.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Pirsch is next, but may I introduce some guests under the south balcony of Senator Chizek.